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COLOMBIA'S LAST VISION OF ELDORADO.

BY MARRION WILCOX.

I.

IN a small but very important volume entitled "*Canal de Panamá*" (Bogotá, 1903), which includes formal letters to Vice-President Marroquín written by several persons, a prominent Colombian expresses the opinion that the United States has evinced a disposition "to haggle about the price" to be paid for the use of the canal zone, "like a rich man taking advantage of the poverty of a harebrained blusterer (*atolondrado botarate*) to whom he proposes terms he would never dare to offer for the same property to another rich man, able to stand up for his own rights in the transaction." Again, a more outspoken critic asserts in response to a request from his government, that he does not share the conviction of those who say, "We Colombians may as well surrender, because in any event we shall be robbed." He does not think that "the fear of being trampled under foot" (*el temor de un atropello*) should be allowed to influence the decision; since "nothing and nobody can prevent the country from making use of all her forces as a sovereign entity; and, if some peril arises, she ought to accept the vicissitudes of resistance, rather than sacrifice her dignity and her interests."

The volume in which we read these striking passages was prepared by direction of the Colombian Executive, issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Colombian Government, and widely distributed with the aid of the Governors of departments.

Similar reproaches and threats were published just before the November revolution (but then without pretence of official sanction) in the United States, where influential journals maintained that the Bogotá politicians had discredited, not Colombia only, but all the Latin-American nations, by attempts to extort money.

It would be folly to ignore the growth of a sentiment among our people which can be expressed in a cool generalization, as follows: Having so thoroughly tested the quality of statesmanship in *one* of the Latin-American countries, we must decline, in future undertakings for the common interest, to divide authority and responsibility with *any* of those republics.

Appreciative words were, indeed, spoken and written in both countries during the earlier stages of the negotiations, and one or two of the contributions to "*Canal de Panamá*" are especially friendly; but, as the negotiations proceeded towards failure, accusation was matched with countercharge, and threat with threat.

Now, undoubtedly, the obligation resting upon Colombia to reach a wise decision in regard to the proposed convention created a situation which may be compared with a great emergency in the life of an individual, uncovering radical strength or weakness. It is, therefore, entirely proper to observe the conduct of Colombians in this crisis very attentively. This situation or emergency searches the depths of the Colombian national character, bringing to the surface, where they may be seen more plainly than ever before, the real, underlying, permanent national characteristics. But we should be sure that our conclusions are based upon traits which have actually been revealed, rather than upon imputed offences, and that we have, not a mere inkling, but the most reliable presentation which it is possible to secure, of the real motives for the Colombian policy of opposition.

Moreover, it is not too soon for us to reflect, that any generalization including all Latin-American communities in one sweeping charge must be somewhat exasperating to the more progressive nations of the South, whose efforts to live down evil reports deserve prompt and cordial recognition.

II.

In Colombia, the first shaping was given to that famous myth which lured adventurers to their destruction among the unexplored mountains and forests of South America; indeed, the home of the "Gilded Man" (*El Dorado*)* has been definitely located by modern scholarship on the table-land of Bogotá. No

* Applicable only to a person—namely, one of the chieftains of the ancient village of Guatavita, Colombia. For the mythical country, the form "Eldorado" is to be preferred.

myth ever died harder. Desperate attempts to reach the ever-receding land where boundless wealth was to be won by a single bold stroke, continued to be made in that part of the world during two centuries. And now in our own age, which will never seem quite prosaic to those who take Colombia into the reckoning, the old effort is renewed with unabated zest. During 1902, so long as it seemed probable to Colombians that the United States would pay any price demanded for the right to cut the canal, and for the incidental concessions, the Eldorado fever, breaking out once more, inflamed fancy, awoke credulity, in the old way; and in the old way chose its victims among the leading spirits. Colombians believed that the road to Eldorado had at last been discovered, and that it ran through their own territory; for was not the canal a mode of access to the resources of one of the richest countries in the world?

Obviously, we should consider for a moment Colombia's estimate of the value of the privileges to be sold or leased. We must do so if we are to appreciate the impoverished proprietor's difficulty in accepting our point of view.

Colombia's agent at Paris, representing the republic in the Administrative Council of the Canal Company, early in 1902 calculated that his Government should demand from the United States not less than \$20,000,000 in gold immediately, this initial payment to be followed by an annuity of \$2,000,000, increasing by \$100,000 each year—which would make the annual payment \$12,000,000 at the end of ninety-nine years. This calculation he based upon the present volume of the isthmian traffic and its probable increase, asserting that the revenue from the canal would, according to the figures of the French Company, reach \$40,000,000 annually. Such a capital sum in hand, and such an assured income, would have made Colombia, at a single stroke, the richest country of her class. And she was the poorest.

Published far and wide, with the indorsement of leading financiers and of the Government, this cheerful estimate did not prepare Colombians to welcome the terms offered in 1903—namely, a cash payment of \$10,000,000, with an annuity of \$250,000, beginning nine years after the exchange of ratifications of the convention, and increasing not at all.

On the contrary, the calculation of the Colombian agent at Paris, Sr. Samper, made moderation appear inopportune. Things

feverishly imagined seemed normal. Listen to the words of the gravest men of the republic, selected by the Government as its special counsellors in this grave matter:

Sr. Francisco Groot, member of the Junta of February 13th, writes to his Government on February 19th, 1902, that, "if Colombia takes the first steps, which her historical antecedents and geographical position authorize her to take, to increase the intimacy of her union with the Great American Republic, she will regain on the instant the prestige lost through her frequent *trastornos* [topsy-turvy conditions] and through ineptitude in the management of her finances, since she will derive from a *perfect alliance with the United States an illustrious political position and an immense fortune.*" Again, commenting upon the ineffectual negotiations for a canal treaty that were begun about thirty-three years ago, he indorses the opinion of "prominent men of all parties," to the effect that "the Great Republic of North America is Colombia's *natural ally*," and that the inter-oceanic canal is to be cut "principally for the benefit" of Colombia and the United States. Mexico is offered as an example of progress "accelerated by North-American enterprises," and Colombians are encouraged to expect still greater achievements in their own favored land, inasmuch as they possess "the immense advantage of never having waged war against the United States, or lost any part of their territory by so doing. They will, on the contrary, enjoy the "prestige consequent upon their ability to contribute to the further aggrandizement of the Colossus of the North, *without any diminution of the national sovereignty.*" In other words, there is to be immense gain on every side, and absolutely no sacrifice: the Eldorado idea exactly. The Vice-President is urged "to avail himself energetically of the brilliant opportunity, which Providence seems to have reserved" for him, "to vanquish every economic difficulty, insure the sovereignty of the nation over its most important part, and establish order in the country on the solid basis of the prosperity of its inhabitants."

The Colombian Minister at Washington, Sr. Carlos Martínez Silva, writes on January 8th, 1902, that the benefits of this conquest of Eldorado should be secured to future generations as well; that a fixed annuity should be secured from the United States, and used in redeeming Colombia's paper-money, paying interest on the national debt, and (among other things) "calming the

susceptibilities of the political parties." Nothing less than an Eldorado could supply resources adequate to the carrying out of this programme; for how great a "fixed annuity" would be required to "calm the susceptibilities of political parties" there, and yet leave a residue sufficient to take in hand the mounting debt of \$15,000,000, and actually to restore value to the 350,000,000 *pesos* of worthless forced paper currency? But all this is not enough. Sr. Silva adds: "It seems to me to accord with strict justice that [the French Company] should pay a good round sum to the Government of Colombia, since they will lose everything if permission (to transfer the concession) is denied."

In a similar strain Sr. Clímaco Iriarte writes on February 15th, 1902: "The property to be ceded does not belong to the French Company exclusively. . . . The Colombian Government has a legal right to decide whether the cession shall take place or not. . . . Before definitive steps can be authorized, the Government and the company must reach an agreement as to the price to be paid for the transfer, and the quota to be assigned to each."

We see that Colombia was advised by her leading citizens to ask for everything—even to reserve absolute sovereignty over and exclusive jurisdiction within the canal zone; to transfer, at a price that only Eldorado could pay, the rights of which she herself could make no use: to sacrifice, therefore, practically nothing. The law of compensation is suspended in Eldorado, as in Utopia. We have already quoted one frank expression of this view; now let us turn to the report of the majority of the commission appointed by the Junta, dated at Bogotá, February 20th, 1902. "Panama"—thus the commissioners write to the Vice-President—"constitutes the most important part of Colombia's territory, her greatness and her future. To deliver it over into the keeping of a foreign government, to withdraw it from our own jurisdiction, would be suicidal, a betrayal of our country, a repudiation of the inheritance which our ancestors won by their blood and sacrifices, and bequeathed to us. . . . A *condominium* with a government holding the canal concession would be absurd on the part of Colombia. Our right cannot be effective unless this undertaking continues to be, as it is, subject to our own laws."

Such were the extravagant hopes cherished by Colombians. We shall trace rapidly the process of disillusionment.

III.

On April 18th, 1902, a "Memorandum of Points which should be Incorporated in the Convention" was presented by Sr. José Vicente Concha, the Colombian Minister who took up Sr. Silva's task at Washington. When this document was forwarded to Bogotá and submitted to the Government's advisers for their opinions, Sr. Iriarte protested (June 2nd, 1902), in the most vigorous language against the "points" in Article 2 of the memorandum. The right thereby granted exclusively to the Government of the United States to maintain, operate, *control*, and *protect* the canal would amount to "absorption of the Isthmus," he said; and inasmuch as the same rights were granted with respect to the auxiliary works, "without fixing or limiting the zone in which such works may be constructed, the Government enjoying this concession will be in fact, if not by right, the sovereign in the department of Panama." He added: "The duration of the concession must in no event exceed one hundred years; if made for a longer period it would amount to a sale." Nevertheless, the terms which seemed so objectionable were retained in the treaty.

The United States suggested, in the draft of the convention presented by the Department of State on July 7th, 1902, that the grant of exclusive rights should be perpetual; but, in a confidential communication to Secretary Hay, dated November 11th, Sr. Concha wrote: "Article 2. The introduction of the expression *á perpetuidad* in this article could not be accepted without changing completely the nature of the contract . . . necessitating an amendment of the Colombian Constitution." Accordingly, as a substitute for a grant in perpetuity of the rights relating to the canal and its auxiliary works, and of the use and control of a strip of territory along the route of the canal, the United States accepted, in a memorandum expressing the wish to reach an agreement with the utmost promptness, the words which appeared in Articles 2 and 3 of the convention concluded January 22nd, 1903, in behalf of Colombia, by Dr. Herrán, Chargé d'Affaires, namely: "the exclusive right *for the term of one hundred years, renewable, at the sole and absolute option of the United States, for periods of similar duration so long as the United States may desire.*" This was more than enough to intensify the fears of those who held that there might be a fatal sacrifice even under a temporary arrangement. To persons of Iriarte's way of think-

ing, the insertion of the words we have italicized amounted to a demand for the surrender of sovereignty.

Nevertheless, Article 4 of the convention provided that: "The rights and privileges granted to the United States . . . shall not affect the sovereignty of the Republic of Colombia over the territory within whose boundaries such rights and privileges are to be exercised. The United States freely acknowledges and recognizes this sovereignty and disavows any intention to impair it in any way whatever, or to increase its territory at the expense of Colombia or any of the sister republics in Central or South America, but, on the contrary, it desires to strengthen the power of the republics on this continent" (evidently meaning "hemisphere"), "and to promote, develop, and maintain their prosperity and independence."

Remember that Articles 2, 3, and 4, like all the rest of the treaty, received Vice-President Marroquín's approval; furthermore, that the approbation of almost any policy or course of action by one prominent Colombian politician insures its condemnation by associates and opponents alike. We need not point out more clearly the invaluable opportunity which was thus supplied to the Colombian Executive's enemies and friends. All his fellow citizens could hopefully undertake to thwart Vice-President Marroquín, by condemning the convention; for they had only to interpret with a little ingenious malice the unfortunate coupling of such a lease as was proposed in Articles 2 and 3 with such an assurance as Article 4 contained.

We may as well look steadily at the fact that a community which, like a weak man guarding his treasure, is suspicious of everybody, always gives heed to such questions as these: "If you deliver your great treasure—your Isthmus, for example—into the keeping of a foreign government, will you not be in danger of losing everything—all the money you receive in payment for the concession, and, through gradual encroachment, the best part of your territory and the independence of your nation?"

"Doubtless, the Government of the United States intends to keep all its promises scrupulously, even chivalrously; but when the Government in that country changes, or some emergency arises there, will annual payments be made by the stronger nation to the weaker, or, rather, in some form of tribute more than offsetting the stipulated rental, by the weaker to the stronger? If

a great Power is allowed to take possession of a part of your domain under a lease running for periods of one hundred years, so long as that great Power may desire, can you believe that Colombia's sovereignty will remain actually unimpaired, forever? Do you realize that, in her desperate financial straits, Colombia is confronted with this extraordinary alternative: either to win so largely that her gain will be comparable with a conquest of Eldorado, or to be utterly ruined; and that utter ruin will come upon her if you surrender the Isthmus? In the words of Nicolás Esguerra, written at Bogotá, 'the canal is perhaps the only effective recourse'—the *only thing*—'that can rescue us from the chaos into which paper-money has plunged us'; but will you, then, knowing this, be deluded by an assurance and disavowal which so strongly resemble a mere equivocation at first sight, and in the end will surely be found inconsistent with the real situation which this treaty would create?" Enemies and friends of Dr. Marroquín, and a few persons unfriendly to the United States, asked such questions, made such suggestions.

Eldorado vanished; and, in the quarter where the Colombians had expected to find it, dire perils arose, like the incalculable dangers of an unexplored country. Patriots and selfish schemers were equally panic-stricken. To both, it seemed that only one hope was left: they must try to change the terms of the convention. But permission to do this was absolutely denied.

On August 5th, 1903, Mr. Beaupré, the American Minister at Bogotá, informed Sr. Luis Carlos Rico, Minister of Foreign Affairs, that the circumstances connected with the negotiations for the canal treaty had been of such a nature that the United States would be justified in regarding any modification whatever of the conditions stipulated in the treaty as a violation of the agreement, jeopardizing the friendly relations which had existed theretofore between Colombia and the United States. Sr. Rico replied guardedly on August 8th, translating into Spanish the paragraph which contained this warning or threat, and seeking to learn whether "among the circumstances alluded to in that paragraph," there were some which had not been disclosed in the previous correspondence. The American Minister replied on the same day that the circumstances to which he referred were fully set forth in his earlier communications, and he reiterated the warning against attempts to modify the treaty or to delay its

ratification. Three days later, Sr. Rico replied, in substance, that he had analyzed the previous correspondence; that proof of the existence of an agreement to deprive Congress of its usual privileges was not adduced; and that his Government could not have promised to violate the Constitution of Colombia, which obliges the Executive to submit to Congress all treaties with foreign Powers. He again quoted the threatening words of Mr. Beaupré's notes of August 5th and 8th, and said that such a conception of the restrictions imposed upon Colombia was "not in accord with diplomatic usages, or with the express stipulation of Article 28 of the convention itself."

It would seem to be impossible for any honest student to reach conclusions radically different from those which Sr. Rico expressed, very courteously, in that letter, dated at Bogotá, 11th of August, 1903, published in the *Diario Oficial* on August 22nd, and in *La Estrella de Panamá* on September 23rd. Turning to the text of the Constitution of Colombia, we find that Title XI., Art. 120, X., authorizes the President to negotiate treaties and conventions with foreign Powers, but adds that "the treaties shall be submitted for the approval of Congress, and the conventions approved by the President when the Houses are not in session, provided that a favorable opinion of the ministers and council of state [has been obtained]." The language of the original, literally translated as above, is far from clear, but passages in other parts of the Constitution relating to the powers of the Legislature leave no doubt that the ratification by both Houses is requisite for the validity of an agreement such as that of January 22nd, 1903, whether it is called treaty or convention. Further, the right of the Legislature to introduce modifications into an international compact is shown by the practice of the Senate of the United States to be as legitimate as the right to approve or disapprove the treaty as a whole.

Can we believe, or could the Colombian Minister of Foreign Affairs, without offence, have assumed, lacking the clearest proof, that the United States had entered into a secret arrangement with Sr. Silva, Sr. Concha, Dr. Herrán, or Dr. Marroquín for the degradation of the Congress of a "sister" republic? Even if a President of Colombia, or a Vice-President wielding the Federal whip (appointing and removing Governors of departments, who in turn appoint the minor local officials), should attempt to dis-

pense with legislative approval and substitute an Executive decree, assuming for this purpose the dictatorial powers conferred by Article 121 of the Constitution, the United States would certainly refuse to sanction or to profit by such an outrageous attack upon the principles of popular government. The dictatorial powers in question were conferred with a wholly different object. They may be employed in time of war, or to suppress riots, but not to coerce the legislative branch of the Government.

Article 28 of the convention, which Sr. Rico cited, provides that "this convention, when signed by the contracting parties, shall be ratified *according to the laws of the respective countries*"—which, it could hardly be denied, was an "express stipulation," as he claimed. Article 4, also, we think, might have been cited to show that the United States could not consistently deny to the Colombian Legislature the free use of a faculty guaranteed by the Constitution; for how could a lesson of disrespect for the highest law of that republic, so inclined to "*frequent trastornos*," be brought into harmony with the declared policy of the Great Republic, the protecting country and the pattern, "to promote, develop, and maintain [the sister republics'] prosperity?" When South-American countries thoroughly respect the laws, they will all prosper—some moderately, others enormously; therefore, the friendly Colossus of the North must place above all the Latin-American virtues in embryo, to be developed and maintained, obedience to law generally, and especially devotion to the Constitutions modelled on our own.

Reflecting on these things we feel that it must have been impossible to place the United States in the attitude of denying to a Colombian Congress the right to consider, in turn and with care, every one of the twenty-eight articles—that is, to "delay" ratification, if that should seem unavoidable, and to "modify the conditions" which they might find unacceptable. But the United States was placed, so far, at least, as the politicians at Bogotá could see, in that position precisely. The interchange of diplomatic notes which we have outlined was complete on August 11th. On August 12th, 24 members of the Colombian Senate (the total membership being 27) voted to reject the treaty.

The next step was to frame a counter-proposition. On August 29th, commissioners appointed by the Senate to "study the manner to satisfy the vehement desire of the Colombian people touch-

ing the excavation of the Panama Canal," attached their signatures to the curious Project of Law, which provided that Colombia should receive at least \$30,000,000 (*i.e.*, 50,000,000 francs from the Canal Company, and \$20,000,000 or more from the United States) as soon as the ratifications of a new treaty should be exchanged; that, with regard to the Panama Railway, the United States might be allowed to succeed to the Railway Company's ample obligations and limited privileges, including the obligation to pay an annual rental of \$250,000, and either surrender to Colombia absolute ownership of the enterprise at the end of 1967 or buy the line in that year at a price which should seem just to both parties—or to an arbitrator; that, with regard to the canal, an easement might be created in favor of the United States, for the sole purpose of cutting, maintaining, and exploiting the canal and its auxiliary works upon a zone of Colombian territory ten miles wide; that the said easement might continue in force for one hundred years, the concessionary paying therefor an annual *canon* (fee paid as a mark of acknowledgment of the superiority of a higher lord) of \$150,000 until 1967, and of \$400,000 from 1968 onward, this privilege being renewable on the basis of an increase in the maximum payment during the anterior period of twenty-five per cent in the annual amount of the *canon*; and, finally, that the negotiation might be effected, not with the United States at all, but, as the alternative of desperation, with some "private company or society."

The Project of Law had a very brief lease of life. It passed from the commission to Senator Rivas Groot, who presented it in secret session on October 6th, showing his apprehension of its wild extravagances by what he said publicly at the time about the treaty it was designed to displace. The Hay-Herrán treaty, he asserted, "was, indeed, unconstitutional, because it virtually ceded the sovereignty; but it would have been accepted with *slight* modifications if the notes of the American Minister, in which he stated that his Government would consent to no modification, had not occasioned its rejection." When the commission's Project collapsed, there was, strictly speaking, no proposition for a canal treaty which the Congress at Bogotá was at liberty to consider. The adjournment of that body, delayed until the end of October, was immediately followed by revolution, the people of Panama having, in the words of the explanation reported to

have been given by our Government to the press on November 6th, "prepared the machinery of revolution in advance."

IV.

Now, the success of the revolutionary movement prepared months in advance is not Colombia's death-blow: it is the beginning of her dismemberment. She had enough pride and savage strength to hide until then a mortal wound sustained last August, when her own children, in a moment of blind passion, rejected the canal treaty. It is not permissible for any one to judge a dying nation harshly. Least of all, should harsh judgments be expressed,—in this still doubtful matter, while the allotment of responsibility cannot be foreseen with absolute certainty,—here.

But, even aside from that consideration; even if our people assume, as they profoundly hope, that the outlook for Colombia may not be wholly tragical, and that our Government may be cleared of all blame; are the charges which are brought against our "sister republic" true? Is it true, as a great newspaper says, that the Project of Law was, or contained, a "cold, deliberate, impudent proposal of blackmail pure and simple?" No. It bears, if one reads it without prejudice, "coldly and deliberately," the plainest marks of that consternation which, in point of fact, prevailed at Bogotá, with curious marks of anger in one or two ill-chosen words. We have seen that it is virtually a recurrence, in a panic, to the old, wildly extravagant terms; a restatement of the hopes entertained in 1902; and its concluding part, which, misread, seems to convey a threat, is a wailing cry: "Surely *somebody* will finish the work, the United States refusing; we shall not lose it altogether—our only treasure and hope; *some* way there must be found to Eldorado!" Childish, even foolish and romantic, this document, the articles of which are not numbered, might be called; but if it, being the work of two men only, Sr. Ospina and Sr. Rodríguez, actually embodied a "proposal of blackmail, pure and simple," does the circumstance that it was riddled by the associates of those two men, in the Colombian Legislature and press, justify the charge published here that "the Colombian Congress adjourned, having indicated its disposition to levy blackmail to the amount of \$10,000,000 on the French Company, and to the amount of \$20,000,000 on the United States?" Again, is it true that Colombia was "an ob-

structionist for extortion," its Government "trying to block the mightiest enterprise ever undertaken for the common benefit of the globe's commerce"; that, having "repudiated her duty to the world," Colombia "is neither entitled to the sympathy and moral support of any great Power, nor likely to receive such sympathy and support"; that the "behavior of the Colombian Government has been most reprehensible and offensive"; and that the rejection of the treaty was "a breach of good faith toward the United States"—an offence which has "frequently caused war?" These quotations are from recent issues of prominent daily papers of New York and Chicago. A discussion of the problematic future "sympathy and support" of great Powers would take us far beyond the natural limits of our theme; the foregoing characterizations of motive and conduct belonging already to the past cannot, however, be overlooked.

On the 20th of last September, one of the Senators who declined to vote against the treaty in August, and who soon afterwards was appointed by Sr. Marroquín to be Governor of a Department, said in the course of an inaugural address: "It has been and is my opinion that the interests of mankind generally, which urgently demand the construction of a waterway uniting the Atlantic Ocean with the Pacific, have a right to (*tienen derecho á*) our co-operation. We must not deny to civilization that which civilization needs on its victorious march." This is well, very well, indeed; but now let us place the speaker, not in Panama, among enthusiastic partizans, but in Bogotá, among his fellow Senators and Representatives. We must think of the Colombian Congress as a body largely composed of "hayseed" legislators. A majority of both Houses, realizing that their departments were remote, and not even connected by railways with the proposed canal, had gone up to Bogotá convinced that they would find it hard to secure for the departments which they represented a share in the benefits to come from the great work; they feared, moreover, lest the independence of the country as a whole should be put in jeopardy. A saying had been current in Latin-America for many years to the following effect: Wherever the canal is cut, there will be the southern boundary of the United States. A minority appreciated, as did Sr. de Obaldia, whose words we have just given, Colombia's duty to the world, in connection with an enterprise for the benefit of both hemispheres.

Met together in their little capital, with its stout, low house-walls, resistant to earthquakes—isolated, close to the equatorial line, far above the summits of high mountains, as we reckon such altitudes—the minority sought to overcome the narrow prejudices of the members from inland departments; and there were golden dreams, as we have said, and there was a flattering new sense of personal importance. Success was not improbable. Then all—both those who had seen one of the two oceans in question and the still more punctilious members who had not—felt that they had been insulted, and struck back quickly, only irritating their antagonist for a moment, while destroying their own nation.

We have not on this writing-table at the moment a transcript of a speech by Senator or Representative who shared de Obaldia's prepossessions; but some man among them must, very quickly, have spoken words which, in the English language, would mean: "The Government of the United States puts us in a position where we cannot act in accordance with our earnest wish, or perform the duty to civilization and progress which, as you know, I stand for. The Government of the United States, and our own Government through its agents at Washington, have inserted provisions making the treaty impossible under our Constitution. Yet, that one of the two governments which, throughout the American hemisphere, stands for civilization and progress, withholds permission to make the slightest change. We are trampled under foot now; nothing could be more insignificant than Colombia. But wait: presently we shall be conspicuous—as recipients of such reproaches as may be justly levelled at those who obstruct a short cut between factory and shop. A foreign Government strips from us the privileges with which the Colombian people clothed us. We offer our naked acknowledgment. We are sure the Senate of the United States would do no less, to please a foreign Government treating with the United States respecting concessions, and preferring to deal solely with Ambassador or President. The Senate of the United States, without 'delay,' gives up its privileges at the bidding of England or Germany. And the Great Republic is our model."

But we must turn sharply away from imagined rhetoric if we are to carry out the promise of the introductory paragraphs.

Unquestionably the Colombian character is essentially feminine. It requires guidance, considerate treatment, and the deft

hand. Even if our diplomacy had not driven the Colombians into a *cul-de-sac*, from which there was no way out but by return to the point of departure—the vision of Eldorado, a year old, four centuries old—they might have failed to appreciate the limitations imposed upon the generosity of our Government; they might have refused to enter into a reasonable agreement, despite such proof of good-will and confidence as the United States evinced, for example, by the complete acceptance of their wishes in regard to Article 23; they might, in short, have shown themselves incapable of rising to the height of the opportunity which was actually present, though not presented. But no man among us who loves justice will claim that we can now see clearly to pull out a mote from Colombia's eye. We did not give the politicians below the Isthmus a chance to demonstrate their incapacity.

Unquestionably, also, relations of protection and dependence might have been established between the United States and a country which had scarcely begun to learn how to keep peace within its borders, to develop its splendid natural resources, or to guard its finances from preposterous mismanagement. Colombians have no talent for sustained co-operation, either among themselves or with the United States—on quite equal terms. This must be gradually acquired, and, for a long time to come, a duty we cannot shirk will be, to supply all but a small fraction of the whole amount of concurrence required for every undertaking we engage in with them and a few other of the least progressive Latin-American nations. But no man among us who hates injustice will claim that our Government's diplomacy made it easy for the bitterly opposed factions in Colombia to sink their differences, unite in approval of a canal treaty, and strike hands with us in hearty acceptance of a good bargain.

Each Latin-American country must be studied as a separate problem: otherwise, we shall never put an end to mutual distrust, misunderstanding, and misrepresentation. We need not point to the achievements of remote Argentina and Chile, since, if we are at all willing to be convinced of the injustice of sweeping generalizations applied to Latin-America, we have only to study the little self-made republic of Costa Rica, which owns the most healthful and habitable part of the territory between the Panama and Nicaragua canal routes.

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